



Crater Lake National Park

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN, NEWSLETTER 1

JANUARY 2001

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Dear Friends,

We need your help. As Crater Lake National Park prepares to celebrate its centennial year in 2002, the National Park Service (NPS) is starting a major planning effort to define the future of this world-renown national park. This planning effort includes development of a general management plan (GMP) that will help to determine the long-term direction for resource management, visitor use and interpretation, and facility needs and uses.

The GMP will build on projects and plans that have been undertaken in recent years. Crater Lake Lodge has been rehabilitated and reopened. A new dormitory for concession employees has been built near Mazama Village. Direction for Rim Village and Mazama Village was looked at in the recently completed Visitor Services Plan. These projects serve as a starting point to look at future direction of resource protection and visitor use in the park. The GMP will provide a framework for addressing major issues at the park for the next 10-15 years.

We invite you to participate in this planning process by commenting on the purpose and significance statements and issues listed in this newsletter and on any other concerns you may have about Crater Lake National Park. All comments will be considered and analyzed and the results presented at public open houses during April 2001. Specific times and locations for these open houses will be announced at a later date. Additional opportunities for comment will follow as we proceed through the planning process, which will probably take about three years. We look forward to your thoughts and ideas and to your continuing involvement in charting a course for Crater Lake National Park for the 21st century.

Chuck Lundy
Superintendent
Crater Lake National Park

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Park planning is organized around three primary questions: WHY was this park established and what is its overall mission? WHAT is the vision for the future (what kind of place do we want Crater Lake to be in the 21st century and beyond?) and HOW do we accomplish our future vision or what actions are needed to create this desired future?

Statements of Crater Lake National Park's purpose and significance provide answers to the WHY questions and form the foundation for the general management plan. Developing a vision for the park's future (answering the WHAT question) is the primary function of the GMP. Comments from park visitors and the general public are very important in the identification of issues and the development of possible visions (called alternatives) for the future. A draft GMP will present alternative ideas for protecting resources, meeting the needs of our visitors, and addressing the concerns of neighbors and partners. Evaluating a set of alternatives enables us to compare and contrast the advantages and/or disadvantages of one course of action over another and establishes an approach to decision making required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

General issues that are addressed in all GMPs and on which we welcome your comments are:

- What should we do to ensure that the park and its resources are adequately protected, preserved, restored and/or maintained in good condition?
- What should we do to ensure that visitors and the general public learn and understand the purpose and significance of the park?
- What level and type of visitor use is appropriate?
- Are there any boundary modifications appropriate for this park?

You are invited to share your ideas on these and other questions with the planning team by completing and mailing the enclosed comment form.

Most HOW questions will not be answered in the GMP, but will be answered in new or revised implementation plans, such as resource management plans, interpretive plans, and others that follow the GMP.



Steel Information Center

Where We Are

In this early phase of the planning process, we need your help to complete the statements of purpose and significance (the WHY) of Crater Lake National Park. Definitions of the following closely related concepts may be helpful:

Park purpose statements are based on park legislation and legislative history, other special designations, and NPS policies. The statements reaffirm the reasons Crater Lake National Park was established as part of the national park system and provide the foundation for park management and use.

Park significance statements capture the essence of the park's importance to our country's natural and cultural heritage. Significance statements are not a list of park resources; rather, they describe the park's distinctiveness and help to place the park within its regional, national, and international contexts. Defining the park's significance helps managers make decisions that preserve the resources and values necessary to accomplish the park's purpose.

We would appreciate your comments on the following draft purpose and significance statements for Crater Lake National Park. (Do you agree with them? How would you improve them?)

PURPOSE



1928 Cafeteria

Crater Lake was established by Congress in 1902. The enabling legislation (16 USC 121) essentially says that Crater Lake is a public park for the enjoyment and benefit of the people. The Park Service is to preserve and protect the natural environment and the fish and wildlife within the park. The Park Service is also committed to preserving the beauty of the park, including the unique ecological and cultural heritage, while fostering understanding and appreciation of the park's assets through enjoyment, education, and inspiration.

SIGNIFICANCE

- Crater Lake is one of the most famous lakes on earth, principally because of the beauty imparted by its large size, blue color, mountain setting, and ever-changing character.
- Crater Lake lies in a caldera that was left by the climatic eruption of Mount Mazama more than 7,700 years ago. The circular lake that formed in the caldera is considered by scientists to be a unique model for how small calderas evolve in geologic times. At a depth of 1,958 feet, Crater Lake is the 7th deepest lake in the world and holds the world record for clarity among deep lakes.
- In addition to the lake, the forests within the park that surround Crater Lake have never been logged and are largely preserved in their pristine condition. These mature forests harbor a variety of plant and animal life that are characteristic of higher elevations in the Cascade Range. Because extensive alteration of forestland has taken place elsewhere in the Cascade Range, some of these plants and animals are rare.



Community House

- Some of the nation's best examples of blending rustic architecture and other built features within a national park setting can be seen at Rim Village, park headquarters, and along Rim Drive. Most of the structures at Rim Village and park headquarters are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Crater Lake is of enduring importance to contemporary members of American Indian tribes because of its centrality to long-standing cultural traditions and resource-harvesting activities, as well as its symbolic significance as a sacred site. The park is part of a larger cultural landscape that extends well beyond park boundaries.
- Crater Lake has been the object of scientific study for more than a century and is unique for the scientific research related to its pristine waters, associated geothermal activities, and unusual aquatic organisms.
- The unique natural and cultural resources of Crater Lake National Park provide exemplary opportunities for students and educators.

CRATER LAKE ISSUES THAT MAY BE ADDRESSED BY THE GMP

The GMP will provide a framework for addressing major issues within the context of the park's purpose and significance. The following is a summary of some issues or problems that the National Park Service is facing or may face in the future. No priority order is implied. Please give us your additions and comments.

Resource Protection

- Forests in the region cross the boundaries of multiple state and federal agencies. How should timber harvest, fire management, and wildlife management be handled among agencies with different missions, management policies, and visitor use regulations? How should the Park Service work with surrounding federal and state forest agencies to enhance management of ecological units that straddle political boundaries?
- The park has large areas that have been proposed for wilderness protection and have been managed as such for many years. Should additional areas be considered within the park?
- The clear waters of Crater Lake and the pristine surrounding forest areas in the park offer unique opportunities for scientific research and education. As a part of its mission, the park promotes and encourages research. Should the park increase and expand education and educational outreach? In what ways should this be done?
- Is the park adequately addressing the potential dangers and resource protection concerns associated with environmental hazard areas - rock fall, landslide, fire, and avalanche areas?

Visitor Use

- We lack current data on visitor expectations and tolerance for greater crowding. What is the correlation, if any, between visitor numbers and opportunities for solitude? The relationship, if any, between numbers of visitors and impacts on resources is not known.

(continued on page 5)

- Is the park currently providing an appropriate range of visitor experiences? Should the park consider increased bicycle, hiking, camping, and pedestrian access? Should any of these activities be decreased?
- Are levels of access within the park during the summer and winter adequate?
- Can more backcountry trails and camping sites be developed without adverse impacts to resources, or should we improve/expand the frontcountry trail system?
- Existing facilities have inadequate space for administrative and support functions. They lack adequate employee workspace and collections storage. Handicapped accessibility is minimal. Should historic structures in the park be adapted for administrative use or should these functions be outside the park?.

Operations

- A substantial portion of park resources is devoted to plowing the road to the Rim Village each winter. Are there other ways to accommodate winter lake-viewing? Should winter lake-viewing be limited? Expanded?
- Can winter vehicular access be expanded to other areas of the park without adverse impacts?

Facilities

- Should alternative means of transportation be considered for visitor access at Crater Lake? If so, what type? Should parts of Rim Drive be closed to vehicular access to improve bicycle and pedestrian access?

Interpretation and Education

- Staff and budget levels limit on-site interpretive presentations and outreach activities. Should the park develop and expand its educational program? If so, in what ways?
- Is the park providing an adequate range of visitor information services?

WHAT NEXT?

Developing a vision for the future of Crater Lake National park is the primary role of the general management plan. Your comments are important for identifying issues and desired visitor experiences and will be used to build on the draft purpose and significance statements and finalize them. Over the spring of 2001, the National Park Service will be seeking out public views and concerns, refining the purpose and significance statements for the park, and compiling and analyzing new information. Public involvement will be a key to preparing a viable plan for Crater Lake National Park. All ideas are encouraged. Please take time to fill out the enclosed prepaid comment form and return by March 15, 2001.